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Message Text

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PAGE 01 DOHA 00459 080918Z
ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 MMO-01
PER-01 ABF-01 MCT-01 /047 W
----------056994 090039Z /21
R 080635Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY DOHA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3542
INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DOHA 459

STATE FOR A/SY/FO AND NEA/EX
KARACHI FOR RMCO
KUWAIT FOR RSO
NAIROBI FOR RSS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, QA
SUBJECT: REQUEST THAT MARINE SECURITY GUARDS BE
ASSIGNED TO DOHA

REF: (A) KUWAIT A-03, DEC 15, 1977 (B) STATE 077412

1. WE APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S TIMELY APPROVAL AND FUNDING OF SECURITY PACKAGE RECOMMENDED BY REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER GIBSON AND SUBMITTED BY THIS EMBASSY. WHEN THE MEASURES CONTAINED THEREIN HAVE BEEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED, A SIGNIFICANT STEP TOWARDS ENHANCING OUR SECURITY WILL HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

2. DURING OUR VARIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITH RSO GIBSON, THE MATTER OF ESTABLISHING A MARINE SECURITY GUARD DETACHMENT AT THIS EMBASSY WAS WEIGHED. GIBSON STRONGLY SUPPORTED ASSIGNING AN MSG DETACHMENT TO DOHA ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE MAXIMUM PHYSICAL SECURITY OF AN EMBASSY IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT MARINE GUARDS.
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THIS WAS ALSO THE CONSIDERED VIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF SECURITY WITH WHOM I HAD DISCUSSIONS BEFORE LEAVING THE DEPARTMENT FOR QATAR LAST SEPTEMBER. SINCE ARRIVAL HERE, I HAVE SOUGHT THE VIEWS OF EMBASSY OFFICERS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD WHICH HAVE MSG DETACHMENTS AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THE PRESENCE OF MARINES ADDS SIGNIFICANTLY TO SECURITY. ONE OF THESE OFFICERS IS THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION AT KUWAIT, PETER SUTHERLAND.

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3. SEVERAL WEEKS AGO VIA A DIPLOMATIC NOTE WE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT OF QATAR WHETHER IT WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF AN MSG DETACHMENT TO DOHA. WE MADE CLEAR THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE TO ASSIGN MARIES HERE. WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE GOQ'S REPLY ALSO VIA DIPLOMATIC NOTE SAYING THAT IT INTERPOSES NO OBJECTION TO A MSG DETACHMENT, IT BEING UNDERSTOOD THAT SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT WOULD NOT INFRINGE ON THE SOVEREIGHTY OF QATAR. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT OUR SAFETY WILL BE ENHANCED BY HAVING THE MARINES AND HEREBY REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL OF SUCH AN ASSIGNMENT.

4. AS DEPARTMENT IS ONLY TOO WELL AWARE, WE ARE AT A SENSITIVE JUNCTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE KNOW TERRORIST ACTIVITY IS TAKING PLACE AND WE ARE WARNED BY THE DEPARTMENT FROM TIME TO TIME TO TIGHTEN OUR SECURITY MEASURES AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF TERRORIST EFFORTS TO HARM US. THE BASIC PROBLEM IN QATAR IS THAT ALMOST ALL THE MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES ARE COMPOSED OF NON-QATARI PERSONS. THIS DISPARATE GROUP IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE WELL TRAINED EVEN IN THE USE OF FIREARMS. WE ARE NOT REASSURED ABOUT HOW EFFECTIVELY, OR EVEN IF, THEY WOULD RESIST TERRORIST ATTEMPTS AGAINST THE EMBASSY.

5. SO FAR, QATAR HAS BEEN A RELATIVELY QUIET AND PEACEFUL PLACE BUT AT THE SAME TIME IT COULD BE A RELATIVELY ATTRACTIVE TARGET FOR TERRORISTS, PARTICULARLY AS THERE ARE NO MARINE GUARDS HERE.
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AS ONE OLD HAND AND VETERAN OF THE KOREAN WAR OBSERVED TO ME, MANY TERRORISTS ARE RELATIVELY AMATEURISH AND UNPROFESSIONAL. IF THIS IS THE CASE, AS WE ARE PERSUADED IT IS, AN ATTACK ON AN UNGUARDED EMBASSY WOULD BE FAR MORE ATTRACTIVE THAN ATTACKING ONE WHERE MARINES ARE STATIONED. THE LATTER DO HAVE A WELL DESERVED REPUTATION FOR TOUGHNESS AND PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE THAT IS ALSO WELL KNOWN IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

6. WE REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT'S EXPEDITIOUS AND SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION OF OUR REQUEST.
KILLGORE

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